Declamation – Speech Analysis

*Goal: Make your audience feel and understand what the original listeners would have felt hearing the content of the speech.*

If your speech was originally given within the last 5 years about an event everyone in the room remembers, you would think your task should be relatively simple. However, emotions fade, memories become less clear, people have mixed emotions, and some might have gained a different perspective with time, even if they specifically remember the event. If you have a more historical event, then it is even more important for you to follow these basic guidelines for meeting your goal.

To help you analyze all factors, answer these questions:

* Why was this speech originally given (speech purpose)? Where and to whom was it given (analyze audience)?
* Why is your author an expert in this field on which he/she speaks? Describe the background of your author to help show the experience he/she has to be able to make a speech like this. (Analyze speaker)
* What emotions, attitudes and visual images come through because of the carefully constructed wording in the speech? Identify “target words” and explain the emotion evident in various parts of your speech.
* Look at the target words/phrases you labeled. What can you do to enhance those parts? Change your rate (faster, slower, pauses)? Change your volume (softer, louder)? Change your tone (higher or lower voice, expression of anger, happiness, sadness)?
* Gestures: We’ve seen these used well and over-used to distraction, so you understand why it is important for gestures to be planned rather than just let you do what you naturally do when you speak. Go through your speech and figure out where to have some type of gesture, then practice a variety of them in front of the mirror or in front of your partner to decide on the best one.
* Body movements: You will not have the podium, so what will you do as you present? Pacing is not an option. As with gestures, all movements should be purposeful. As you read through your speech, there are parts in your speech that seem like a natural transition, whether the author was moving on to another point or simply just finding a way to further explain. At those points, you should move to a different side of the room, even just simply taking four or five steps. Label those transitional points.
* Concluding: What mood(s) did the speaker originally want the audience to feel during the speech and leave with at the end?
* Writing an introduction: yes, this is the last thing you do but the first thing you will say. Now that you completely understand your speech, you need to introduce it to us, your audience. The purpose of your introduction is to tell us who performed your speech originally and when as well as why he/she presented it. Give us the background so we can identify with the time period and environment. It should be at least 30 seconds in length. Do research about the history if you don’t know how people felt about this event or what happened during it.